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ABSTRACT

As follow-up to a five-year Council for Cultural Cooperation project on migrants, a seminar and roundtable discussion on the theory and practice of intercultural education in Europe is presented. Seminar participants include educators and administrators from Belgium, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden as well as a representative from the Council of Europe. The participants concur on the need for intercultural or "contact" education for all school children as a response to the on-going presence of immigrant families in Europe. Agreement is also apparent on the need to retrain teachers for intercultural education and to establish a link between centers of research and teacher-practitioners. There is no consensus on the objectives of intercultural education, which is variously believed to be necessary to: (1) promote knowledge and understanding of ethnic relations; (2) combat ethnic prejudice; (3) condemn racism; (4) explain the history of migration and the balance of power between states; (5) provide equal opportunity in education; (6) enhance the self-esteem and status of minority groups; (7) harmonize the relationship of immigrant groups with the dominant group; (8) work towards a multiracial society; and (9) study "culture." Two teacher working groups, Italian and Belgian, provide suggestions on the contents and criteria for a teaching plan for intercultural education. (CS)

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The CDCC's Project No. 7:
"The education and cultural development of migrants"

Interculturalism: theory and practice

Seminar held at Limbourg (Hengelhoef Conference Centre)
on 14 and 15 April 1987

General report by Marie-France Cammaert
Doctor of anthropology

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I. Introduction

A. Organisation of the seminar

The CDCC's Project Group No. 7 expressed the wish to hold a seminar on "interculturalism" as a follow-up to its five years of activity (brought to a close by the final conference in Rotterdam from 7 to 11 April 1986). Once the Council of Europe had signified its readiness to help to organise such a meeting, Mrs Rosiers - in her capacity as representative of the Flemish Community in Project Group No. 7 - contacted the national and community Ministers of Education of Dutch-speaking Belgium, who agreed to combine their efforts in organising the seminar.

At the outset, a representative of the national Minister of Education and a representative of the Community Minister of Education and Training, in collaboration with Mrs Rosiers acting as co-ordinator, prepared the programme of the seminar. Following acceptance by the CDCC, the programme was fleshed out by a working group consisting of the original team plus representatives of each branch of Dutch-language education in Belgium.

B. Target audience

The seminar was aimed at teachers at all levels of Dutch-language education in Belgium - primary and secondary education and teacher training - as well as the staff of psycho-medico-social centres and, naturally, other interested parties.

In view of the limited space available at the conference centre and, above all, the shortage of facilities for simultaneous interpretation, the organisers envisaged 120 participants at most. In fact, a much greater number turned up, but since many of them had a good knowledge of foreign languages, there were no insurmountable technical problems.

II. Programme

Tuesday 14 April 1987

9.45 - 10.00 am: Opening of the seminar by the Minister of Education, Daniel Coens

10.00 - 10.30 am: Introduction by Gabrielle Gottelmann, Council of Europe representative

10.30 - 11.15 am: Bertil Jacobsson, Director, Council of Education (Lurda, Sweden): "Interculturalism in Sweden"

11.15 am - 12.30 pm: Gabriele Steffen, Deutsches Institut für Fernstudien (DIFF, Tübingen, Germany): "Interculturalism and teacher training"

2.00 - 3.00 pm: Willem Fase, Erasmus Universiteit (Rotterdam, Netherlands): "Intercultural education: theory and practice"

3.00 - 5.00 pm: Working groups

Wednesday 15 April 1987

9.30 - 11.00 am: Professor Eugeen Roosens, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven (Dutch-language University of Louvain) and Professor Marcel van Spaandonck, Rijksuniversiteit Gent (State University of Ghent): "Intercultural education: present state of theory and practice in Belgium"

11.15 am - 12.15 pm: Reports and questions of working groups
Plenary discussion with the participation of the five experts

12.15 - 12.30 pm: Closure of the seminar by the Community Minister of Education and Training, Theo Kelchtermans

III. Papers

Daniel Coens, Minister of Education

When intercultural education was first launched in 1982, the following five basic principles of "contact" education (Elkaar-ontmoetend onderwijs) were formulated:

1. It is necessary to respect and develop the identities of the various cultural groups;

2. Teaching and education are the ideal means to enhance participation in social life;

3. Teaching and education should be aimed at complete integration as well as at preservation of individual identity;

4. Contacts with other peoples' cultures are an incomparable source of enrichment for all pupils, including indigenous ones;

5. Flemish and foreign teachers should work in teams as a means of continuously training themselves for this new and stimulating task.

Since that time, ideas on interculturalism have evolved. The final report of the Council of Europe's Project No. 7 bases its recommendations on an acknowledgment of the multicultural nature of present-day society. This fact is borne out by statistics as well as by trends which, by removing from immigrants their status as temporary workers, raises the question of their settlement and integration in society.

These trends are reflected in the changing nature of our policies: whereas the first phase focused the reception on immigrants' children and the second on the consolidation of personal language and culture, the third is broadening out into an intercultural approach aimed at the entire population, including nationals. It is important therefore to develop communication and social interaction: the term "contact education" was selected advisedly.

Two major problems remain:

1. The provision of equal opportunities in education (a large percentage of immigrant children never reach secondary level);

2. the strengthening of links between children and schools, which demands the adjustment of teaching to pupils' initial level and the imparting of an intercultural character to curricula and teaching methods.

Because of the dynamic nature of the principle of interculturalism, those working in the field should be given opportunities for periodic retraining. This illustrates the importance of seminars such as this one. All being well, this will lead to a constructive dialogue between experts and practitioners and to the formulation of conclusions that will contribute meaningfully to our policy.

Gabrielle Gottelmann

Ever since its foundation, the Council of Europe has striven unceasingly for the defence of human rights, the flowering of European culture in all its diversity, and the improvement of living and working conditions. As part of this general mission, the Council has naturally been concerning itself with immigrants.

Although this seminar is placing particular emphasis on the field of education, it is important to view interculturalism in a broader context. In this regard, four theses may be expounded:

1. The importance of social protection for migrants and their families

Among the Council's various activities, particular mention may be made of the following:

- those aimed at improving housing, training and infrastructures in the countries of origin of migrants who are nationals of member states.

- those designed to provide better protection in legal, social, health and employment matters for migrants in host countries.

2. In order to ensure the development of every child - and perhaps even more so of children of immigrant origin - it is essential that the child should be made aware of his roots and of the culture of his parents and forbears.

Hence the importance of teaching the language and culture of origin.

To meet the challenge of the proliferation and linguistic and ethnic diversification of immigrant children in the 1970s, special classes were organised. An evaluation of such classes by the Council of Europe revealed some negative aspects (eg poor motivation on the part of immigrant children). This led to the conclusion that, as far as possible, immigrants' language and culture should be incorporated into school curricula for all children.

3. Teacher training for nationals of host countries should, in the same way as for nationals of origin countries, ensure that teachers are familiar with the various cultures represented in schools. Teachers should acquire the motivation and skills needed for an intercultural approach to education.

An effort should also be made in countries of origin to produce teachers who are aware of migrants' living conditions and understand the languages of host countries.

Teachers in host countries and those from the countries of origin should learn to co-operate together and appreciate each other's teaching methods.

4. Interculturalism should become an integral part of all policies of European societies

Much remains to be done in this respect. The impact of efforts made in the field of education will be restricted unless something is done in other areas to supplement and strengthen them.

It is important to face the facts: the size of immigrant populations shows no sign of diminishing. Moreover, such populations are frequently concentrated in particular neighbourhoods or regions; hence the importance of local or regional policies taking this fact into account.

Finally, it should be pointed out that young people of the so-called second generation of immigrants are to make themselves heard. Torn as they are between different cultural references, they feel a particularly pressing need to express themselves through the mass media, and in the journalistic and artistic and socio-cultural professions.

It is heartening to note that a growing number of host countries and countries of origin are gradually adopting measures on behalf of such persons. However, the fight against xenophobia and for human rights and the acceptance and enhancement of cultural differences is far from being won.

In addition to its ongoing activities in this field, the Council of Europe is carrying out a project designed to improve community relations. In November 1987, its Parliamentary Assembly also plans to launch a week of action on the subject: "Enjoying our diversity".

Interculturalism should not be regarded as a matter for idealists. The cultural diversity of our societies is a reality which calls for the formulation of practical policies. The promotion of mutual understanding and co-operation is therefore a necessary task as well as one that promises a rewarding venture for all.

Bertil Jakobsson: Interculturalism in Sweden

In 1985, the Swedish Parliament decided to adopt an intercultural approach to education as a basis for curricular and teaching methods in Swedish schools. In two publications (which appeared in 1983 and 1984), the Commission for Immigrant Languages and Culture in Schools and Adult Education had already expressed thewish to introduce intercultural education in the interests of a common future and as a foundation of education in all schools. Where did these ideas come from?

It is noteworthy that the special investigator and the Commission's secretary were greatly influenced by their visits to several European countries. Moreover, the reports of the CDCC's Projects Nos. 5 and 7 played an important part. Such influences pointed in a single direction: an intercultural approach to education.

This type of education is clearly aimed at all children and teachers, not just at immigrant children and their teachers. The Commission is well aware of the need to change the attitude of the majority group so that immigrants may be fully accepted and an intercultural community allowed to develop.

Sweden's intercultural approach betokens a process by which persons of different cultures and speaking different languages can mutually influence one another. Swedish schools comprise components of various cultures. "The world has come into the classroom", not only through teaching but also through travel, television and the other mass media.

Teachers have the major task of training pupils in international understanding and tolerance vis-à-vis other peoples and their opinions. Moreover, they should buttress their self-confidence and their trust in their own past. This is equally true for Swedish children and immigrant children. In the long run, this perspective should become an inherent part of teacher training and the substance of teaching materials. Already most primary teacher training curricula have been revised so as to incorporate the intercultural approach. This process will be further extended in the future.

The Swedish National Board of Education has published, in co-operation with the Swedish National Institute for Information on Teaching Materials, a booklet for use in schools as a basis for discussions on this subject. It provides examples of ways in which curricula, materials and teaching methods can be based on the experiences of all pupils.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that schools can only introduce such an intercultural approach. The whole of society must participate in the effort if substantial results are to be achieved.

Gabriele Steffen: Interculturalism and teacher training

1. Intercultural education

Mrs Steffen began her talk by describing several ways of dealing with a subject, such as "vegetables", from an intercultural viewpoint. She drew the conclusion that intercultural teaching was an educational principle, implying the need to create reciprocal types of education for pupils of different nationalities and cultures. These cultures do not simply co-exist statically but interact with one another and are seen and felt to do so by pupils.

Intercultural education is an all-inclusive concept where content and methodology are designed to cover not only the cognitive and psychomotor aspects but also the emotional aspect.

One aim that is central to intercultural education is that of linking teaching in German to teaching in the mother tongue. At present, teachers in these two sectors work separately, whereas it would be very interesting to see how, for instance, mother-tongue instruction in Germany diverges from that in the country of origin and the extent to which the culture of origin has become an "immigrant culture". If teaching is ultimately to be genuinely bilingual, teams of teachers of different nationalities should be trained for the purpose of co-ordinating both content and organisation.

2. Intercultural education in teacher training

a. "Teaching for foreigners"

The role of teachers is therefore very important. Yet are they being properly prepared for their task? Certainly not in Germany. We are still a far cry from fully implementing the Council of Europe's guidelines.

Since the 1970s, however, steps have been taken to introduce the whole question of educating foreign children into advanced teacher training. As a result, these "teaching methods for foreigners" have spread to a number of higher-level institutions and are even a compulsory subject in some instances. Courses of further training for teachers have also been organised. These are partly linked to research projects or the result of requests from certain schools. In addition, there are other courses which, without being a preparation for school work, open up possibilities of work on the "foreign market". The content of all these courses has gradually been extended so that reference is increasingly being made to "intercultural education" rather than "teaching for foreigners". This is not to say that all the difficulties have been cleared away. The main problem, in Mrs. Steffen's opinion, is that curriculum development is inadequate; if anything, indeed, it is declining at the present time.

As for the retraining of teachers, it should be noted that several training programmes are at present being run, not only for German but also for foreign teachers. These programmes cover several fields and deal with a number of subjects.

b. Elements of intercultural education in teacher training

Intercultural education, as described in the first paragraph, has however, not yet, been integrated into initial or in-service teacher training. On the one hand, intercultural education may be regarded as a component of teacher training; on the other, teacher training itself may be regarded as a type of intercultural education.

The latter view point, which is not widely held, rests on two basic premises: firstly, that of reciprocal instruction, involving an interchange between pupils (having regard to their respective nationalities and cultures) as well as between teachers and pupils, and, secondly, that of co-ordination between teaching in German and teaching in the mother tongue.

As a rule, a study of the phenomenon of "culture" is not an integral part of teacher training. In intercultural education, however, a considerable number of questions of methodology arise which call for a type of training that includes an analysis of "culture" and its content. For example, there

are such fundamental questions as: What definition do we lend to the term "culture"? What definition do other societies lend to it? What is the relationship between "culture" and "society"? How are we to define regional cultures? What change does the definition of cultural elements undergo in the context of migration when they are removed from their original context, are "folklorised", commercialised and so forth? Methods of comparing cultures also need to be scrutinised: what criteria are used?

Such an analysis must, of course, be provided with a substance. Here is an important task for research. This study has a synchronic dimension, ie the complexity of the cultural reality of our multicultural societies, and a diachronic dimension, ie the search for traces of intercultural history. But no such intercultural history of societies has yet been written, so that we have to move forward step by step.

Finally, there is the problem of professional practices. This raises the question of designing a type of school and a style of teaching that enable the children of minority groups to prepare for life in an intercultural society with optimum prospects of success. Hence there is a need to work out an appropriate legal framework and organisational system so that schools can formulate their pedagogical profiles in an intercultural context. All this, however, will have no impact unless intercultural education provides opportunities for specialisation and offers foreign teachers the same working conditions and chances of appointment as their German counterparts.

3. Two examples of intercultural training

a. Tübingen University project

This project involves the preparation of materials for teachers with foreign pupils; at the outset, it was intended for German teachers only, but now aims at foreign teachers too. The materials consist of series of bilingual texts (Turkish-German, Italian-German), with the foreign language predominating and only part of the text being translated into German. The various series deal with German school, examples of teaching in the mother tongue, the current educational debate in Italy and the development of teaching in Turkey. Teachers accordingly have to approach their colleagues for linguistic assistance or data, and this serves to promote intercultural education.

b. Two-way training programme at the Freiburg teacher training college

This is a two-year programme designed to link together (a) teaching in the mother tongue, (b) German as a second language, and (c) intercultural education. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German teachers jointly formulate syllabi, put them into practice and evaluate their results. Each one also learns a foreign language. Finally, pedagogical and linguistic seminars are held on subjects arising out of the group work. Mention should also be made of a large number of sociocultural activities.

4. Problems of intercultural education

Mrs Steffen referred to a number of basic objections levelled against intercultural education, viz: migration is an economic, political and social problem, not an educational one; intercultural education is of

benefit to nationals but fails to deal with immigrants' real problems; education should not be intercultural but rather bilingual; since education is indivisible, there should not be any special type of education, such as intercultural education.

After making a brief analysis of these objections, Mrs Steffen countered them with her own viewpoint.

Willem Fase: Intercultural education: theory and practice

1. Introduction

Intercultural teaching has long been a subject of discussion in the Netherlands. This is an indication of a latent need, ie a desire to provide schools with the means to respond to the major changes in the ethnic make-up of society as a whole.

Intercultural education should play a major part in bringing about a society in which all ethnic groups are guaranteed the same treatment and opportunities. Dominant groups have an important part to play in this process: thus we are all concerned by intercultural education.

It was not until the early 1980s that the Dutch authorities woke up to the fact that minority groups were a permanent feature of society. Two basic ideas then took shape: enhancing the social status of minority groups and harmonising their relationship with the dominant group. These are the roots of intercultural education. Up to now, however, there appears to have been more discussion than agreement on the subject. The authorities have still not managed to express their intentions in clear, workable terms. It may be said, however, that ambitious ideals have been set aside in favour of more feasible ones.

At the request of the government, the Department of Educational Sociology and Policy (Vakgroep voor Onderwijssociologie en Onderwijsbeleid) of Erasmus University in Rotterdam carried out a study of the theory and practice of intercultural education. The plan of this research was in three parts:

(1) study of the conceptual framework of intercultural education;

(2) empirical study of intercultural education in practice;

(3) enquiry into the factors which hinder or promote intercultural education.

2. What does intercultural education stand for in the Netherlands?

Intercultural education spans the whole breadth of teaching activities involving relations between ethnic groups. Its all-embracing nature means that intercultural education is aimed at all schools.

As to the main features of intercultural education, an early theory that the role of such education should be to develop the identity of immigrant children was quickly countered by the objection that such a view of things

stigmatised the children of immigrants and that the real purpose of education was to impart knowledge and skills. The latter conception steered the debate in two directions - one pluralist, the other anti-racist. Since both had disadvantages, Willem Fase proposed an alternative direction that took account of the specific tasks of teaching and, hence, relied on rationality rather than affectivity, on empathy rather than sympathy.

In his view, the aims of intercultural education may be summarised in three points:

1. the promotion of knowledge and an understanding of ethnic relations;

2. the combating of ethnic prejudice;

3. the condemnation of racism.

Six factors are essential if intercultural education is to be effective:

1. professional competence on the part of teachers with regard to ethnic relations;

2. participation of all categories of educational personnel;

3. unbiased teaching materials;

4. participation of ethnic minorities at all levels of the education system;

5. regular contacts between schools and parents;

6. contacts between schools and the neighbourhood.

Factors 1 and 3 are of cardinal importance.

3. The situation at present

Surveys by Erasmus University in Rotterdam show that approximately half of the primary and secondary schools examined make no provision for intercultural education. Particularly in schools where there are no immigrants or where the governing board considers that minority children have adjusted well and are conforming to the daily routine, no need appears to be felt for intercultural education. This goes to show that the presence and supposed adaptation of children of ethnic groups plays a major part in the acceptance of intercultural education.

Other schools, as a rule, devote little time to intercultural education. The above-mentioned conditions do not exist in most cases. When set against established quality criteria, the achievements are rather mediocre.

Moreover, there is little sign of any change that can improve the situation.

External assistance, too, is rather weak. There are no institutions for guiding, advising or training those engaged in intercultural education; almost nothing is being done to disseminate the idea of the need for intercultural education. Some relevant material does exist, but it is designed for particular projects and is therefore unsuitable for transfer to other contexts.

Eugeen Roosens: Intercultural teaching: present state of theory and practice in Belgium

Restricting his study to the field of social and cultural anthropology, Professor Roosens starts out from a concrete reality, viz the idea of "culture". He identifies two basic dimensions in this concept: the rational sphere and the non-rational sphere, which he examines from both the theoretical and practical point of view.

1. The rational sphere

Part of every culture is rational in two senses of the word. On the one hand, man employs his mind to produce the components that make up his culture. On the other, a research worker or someone who does not belong to that culture is in a position to evaluate it critically. This is the field of science and technology and their products.

Thus Western Europe has a sector that attracts those who do not belong to its culture; these include most immigrants, who left their countries for that very reason. The material culture of their place of origin has not reached a comparable level. It would be futile to try to deny this.

All children, whether nationals or immigrants, aspire to possess the products of a higher culture, with the result that they share a considerable number of cultural values. This accounts for the concern felt by those practising the multicultural approach to create conditions where immigrant children will have the same chances and opportunities as nationals. Yet, whereas the majority of these practitioners have a clear view of the question, they frequently forget that this very trend is an integral part of second and third-generation culture.

It can be seen in actual practice that all those participating in "contact" education (Elkaar-ontmoetend onderwijs), and those engaged in bicultural or intercultural teaching, focus their efforts on the economic chances and social-advancement opportunities of the children of minority groups.

It is essential to continue along this path and integrate into teaching such subjects as the history of migration, the balance of power between states and the socio-economic inequalities of the various regions of origin, as well as the history of racism and the situation in this respect in north-west Europe.

2. The non-rational (expressive) sphere

"Non-rational" should not be confused with "irrational", which means "the opposite to rational", eg magic. The non-rational sphere, on the other hand, includes the components which are spontaneously mentioned in any discussion on an intercultural or bicultural project, ie the expressive sector: language, religion, the distribution of roles between men and women, clothing habits, etc.

Language, for instance, is not a rational invention, any more so than religion. It is impossible to assess or classify such things; one is no better than the other. In this sense, all cultures are equal.

One particular dimension stands out at this level whenever expressive culture is combined with ethnic identity. Individuals define themselves by means of a limited number of cultural features (which are not rational). These features may vary in the course of time as well as from one individual to another. Culture is what enables us to find our bearings in relation to others.

Parents and children should be given the opportunity to develop without any constraints and choose their own orientation. To prevent them from maintaining their mother tongue, for instance, is to stand in the way of that development and sever the links between parents and children. It is the most radical form of assimilation.

Since an ethnic identity is a means of being onself, immigrants cannot express themselves or defend their rights unless they are allowed to be themselves.

Collaboration between teachers of both immigrant and national origins is vital as a way of showing children that representatives of different cultures can act together as equals.

3. Rational/non-rational interaction

The majority of Belgians are mainly interested in the economic and technological aspects of culture - and the mass media only strengthen that attitude. The non-rational sphere thus remains in the shadow. As minority groups have little to contribute on the rational front, their prestige merely diminishes. They become objects of curiosity (tourism plays a not inconsiderable role in this regard).

Many attempts are being made to give minority children an opportunity to be independent, in particular through a knowledge of several languages.

Furthermore, Louvain University has organised a retraining course intended first and foremost for qualified teachers in the hope that they will spread the fruit of their studies in their schools (cascade effect).

Since 1972 the same university has also been running a comprehensive course in social and cultural anthropology, the first year of which sets out specifically to provide the students (some 50 each year) with an in-depth view of cultural diversity and its underlying unity.

Teacher training, both initial and in-service, is of the utmost importance. Text-books are also urgently needed. This is also true of schools where there are no minority children: teachers with appropriate training can have a marked influence on the attitudes of their pupils.

Marcel van Spaandonck: Intercultural education: the present state of theory and practice in Belgium

1. Background

As a linguist, Professor van Spaandonck made an analysis of prejudices and clichés relating to Africa, from which he went on to make a study of ethnocentrism. His work did not stop at the European way of looking at the rest of the world, but also took in the manner in which "others" see Western Europe.

In 1972, the following long-term plan of action was drawn up:

- organisation of a major exhibition on the subject: "Demystification and literature of Africa";
- investigation of prejudices among university students and secondary school pupils and teachers;
- holding of congresses and symposia;
- strengthening of international scientific contacts;
- introduction at the University of Ghent of courses in socio-linguistics (language and society), ethnology (language and perception), communication and "world training";
- foundation of a World Training Centre in 1980.

Since that time, Professor van Spaandonck's world perception has steadily developed.

2. Multiracial society

We are faced with a choice: are we to live in a closed society (in which simplicity, security, uniformity and the handing-down of traditional values are the rule) or in an open one (in which complexity, diversity and a spirit of enquiry prevail)?

The stage has been reached where there can be no halting the development of a multiracial society. At most, the process can be somewhat slowed down. The only possible aim of world training is therefore to give all people, young and old, the means to move about, feel content and survive in a multiracial society.

On the one hand there are closed-society concepts (eg my own world; uni- or mono-ethnicity; centre of the world; fear of and contempt for foreigners), on the other open-society concepts (eg our world; pluri- or multiethnicity; perceptive faculty; visibility). In addition to these opposing concepts there are those of change, mobility, vision of the future, communication, interdependence and reciprocity.

3. Development of the multiracial society

Acknowledgement of the permanency of the presence of ethnic minorities is equivalent to acceptance of the growing and permanent nature of the multiracial society as well as of the need for an open, tolerant (in the positive sense) and understanding society.

Such an open society cannot be built in a day, however. Lifelong training should be started at once as an essential prerequisite. The status of the human and cultural sciences should also be enhanced. Interdisciplinary and applied research are essential. As regards teachers, those already qualified should be retrained while trainee teachers should be provided with a programme of world training and intercultural education.

4. Conclusion

Even though the present is naturally important, Flanders should be viewed in terms of the future and in a world-wide context. It is going forth to meet the world, yet that meeting could lead to an explosion and cause a world war of a completely new kind - a war of ideas, customs and attitudes based on a lack of understanding and a feeling of superiority and a spirit of intolerance.

Previous world wars led to the emancipation and independence of many colonies. Frontiers were drawn at random, without regard to ethnic groups. This accounts for the far-reaching change in the international physionomy of the post-war world. The distribution of wealth and power which was effected in the early 20th century but which was the result of Western expansion that began back in the 15th century was called in question. And this process is still under way.

Theo Kelchtermans, Community Minister of Education and Training

Work cannot be effective in practice unless it has an appropriate theoretical base. Nor is there any sense in letting oneself be submerged by a welter of theories unless one can detect their value as practical tools. By linking theory to practice, this seminar has attempted to find the right path between these two extremes.

The seminar was organised as part of a broad policy for the education and training of immigrants which Ministers Coens and Steyaert helped to draw up. Two important points stand out in the policy declaration in this respect:

1. The importance of retraining courses for teachers

Last February, a retraining course for teaching personnel began at Louvain University. Naturally, this is but a first step. It is not possible to consider organising retraining courses on a large scale at present; accordingly, we began with this category in the hope that the participants would help, stimulate and encourage those around them in a constructive fashion.

2. Opening-up towards Europe

Flanders is not alone in having to face the problems of immigration. Collecting information on activities and events in neighbouring countries is a sure way of improving one's knowledge and thereby assessing one's own working methods. In this sense, the exchange of views at this seminar will certainly prove beneficial.

Finally, I should like to emphasise the importance of the theoretical basis and of skills in intercultural education.

For the purpose, it has been decided to set up a Centre of Pedagogy in Limbourg Province to serve the entire Flemish region. The experts from this centre will provide back-up for those working in the field.

A Scientific Centre is also to be set up by Louvain University: my community colleague, Mrs Steyaert, is responsible for the documentational section, while I myself, together with my national colleague, Mr Coens, am concerned with the financing of scientific research.

IV. Working groups and round table

The group discussions took place after the statements by the three foreign experts. By linking theory to their practical experience, the participants managed to draft, firstly, a series of questions to be put to the speakers (and which were discussed at the round table) and, secondly, a number of questions and recommendations for the Belgian Government. I have attempted to record the results of those discussions as faithfully as possible.

Group 1: Teachers' initial situation

Questions for the speakers

1. How far do the three models proposed by the foreign speakers meet practical requirements?

2. To what extent are the three papers based on scientific research?

3. What were the first schemes for training foreign teachers in the host country?

Questions for the government

1. How does the government intend to create the spatial, temporal and structural conditions needed to provide teachers with the appropriate knowledge and skills for the development of intercultural education?

   How is this training or retraining to be integrated into teachers' professional work?

2. In order to ensure the future of intercultural education, it is necessary to draw up "statutory" agreements in favour of foreign teachers. How does the government intend to meet this pressing need?

3. Is it planned to set up a special institute for the formulation of curricula for teacher training colleges?

4. Can a list of criteria and key rules be prepared in order to ensure that existing teaching materials can be adapted to intercultural education? Who is responsible for this matter?

5. It is desirable that peoples should come together. However, we may well ask to what extent different cultures can actually meet one another. What are the limits? This is not just a technical problem, but also an ethical one: knowledge cannot solve everything.

Group 2: Pupils' initial situation

There were no questions for the speakers but some thoughts on the factors that influence the situation of underprivileged immigrant children:

- On the one hand, education employs types of communication that such children are unfamiliar with, both socially and culturally (social codes, level of verbalisation etc).

- On the other hand, the family circle of such children is unable to help them to develop the basic skills required by our system of education. Indeed, it tends to hinder their academic progress.

Such factors as limited mastery of the mother tongue and of the language used in teaching, cramped living space, the rather passive attitude of parents towards school and variations in the children's cognitive development are all features of this family environment.

It is necessary to concentrate on the non-verbal attitudes of such children in nursery schools and systematically stimulate their cognitive development. This presupposes an understanding of the situation and the availability of appropriate teaching advice as well as effective materials.

Recommendations to the government

1. Halt the expansion of "concentration" schools through political measures, as they reduce scope for study and emancipation and hamper cross-cultural contacts.

2. Provide teachers and assistance of psycho-medical-social centres with the necessary support for analysing the initial situation of these children and adapting the educational process accordingly.

Group 3: Content of intercultural education

Two working groups - one composed of Italian teachers, the other of Belgian - examined this subject. There were no questions for the speakers, merely an account of individual experiences and several suggestions to the government.

The Italian teachers were of the view that a teaching plan for intercultural education should be based on the following principles:

1. the importance of psychological and sociological research in relation to immigrant children;

2. helping children to appreciate their culture of origin by means of appropriate explanations;

3. hence, the paramount need for active and expressive participation by children (theatre, museums, audio-visual equipment, etc);

4. the scientific objectives of official curricula should correspond to pupils' own experiences;

5. collaboration between Belgian and foreign teachers is a first step towards interculturalism;

6. an intercultural programme can help to motivate children and their parents.

In the opinion of the Belgian teachers:

1. the present curricula offer some scope for intercultural work, but teachers are not given adequate data to enable them to prepare their lessons accordingly;

2. in this regard, the flow of data from universities has difficulty in reaching the grassroots;

3. the data required for intercultural work should be transmitted during teacher training (in the case of both Belgians and foreigners);

4. Belgian and foreign teachers should be given opportunities for in-service training (cf Group 1's opening remark); the award of a certificate could help to motivate them further;

5. temporary arrangements are not sufficiently supportive; they should therefore be structurally integrated;

6. neither the government nor schools are sufficiently committed to the implementation of intercultural education as an experiment in "contact" education.

Group 4: Objectives of intercultural education

The participants discussed the difficulty of specifying the basic objectives of intercultural education, but found no solution.

Two options seemed discernible:

- the main task of intercultural education is to help pupils to acquire a positive self-image;

- knowing the host country's language is an important factor for that purpose; the socio-communicative function should be given greater emphasis.

This led to two questions for the speakers:

1. Assuming that these two global objectives necessarily involve some diversity, there arises the question of proceeding from a minimum number of basic objectives. Have any steps already been taken in this direction?

2. Such diversity calls for differentiation of teaching objectives, curricula and methods. Is this possible, sensible and effective?

Remarks by the speakers

- Again, all the speakers stressed that intercultural education was essential for all children, including those attending mono-cultural schools.

- Teacher training and retraining

BJ: Intercultural training should be integrated into ordinary training.

GS: The work of teachers engaged in intercultural education should be professionalised.

WF: Financial resources play an important part.

ER: Everyone should be trained for intercultural education, and those who wish should be allowed to study it in greater depth.

- Situation of foreign teachers

GS: In Germany, appointments are difficult to come by.

Foreign qualifications are not sufficiently uniform.

BJ: In Sweden, there are three ways of being accepted as a qualified teacher:

- attending a training course;
- working as a teacher after attending a training course in the country of origin; after one-and-a-half years' service in a Swedish school, a qualified teacher's certificate is awarded;
- after a number of years, the Swedish authorities may recognise you as a qualified teacher.

- Links with scientific research and the university world

VS: The relationship between research and practice is still far from clear. However, the universities should shoulder their responsibilities.

ER: Our knowledge is still incomplete: what do we know, for example, about what migrant children feel at school? Or about what they do? There is still a lot of research to be done.

WF: It is difficult to link theory and practice; there are no ready-made solutions. It might be possible to group together a number of people, but only a few guidelines could be given and they would really seem rather trite. In the end, it is the teacher who has to act.

BJ: It would be rewarding to co-operate with the countries of origin (by spending some time there) and with foreign teachers with experience of Swedish education.

- Objectives

BJ: Intercultural education is intended to help pupils to develop their own personality and become aware of other values. They will then be in a position to compare those values, respect them and appreciate them.

WF: I am opposed to the development of a positive self-image because it leads to a rather pathological attitude ("poor little immigrant children"). Immigrants are surely not the only people needing assistance to develop their personality. And is this really the role of education? It would be better to start from general and universalistic principles.

ER: I agree with Willem Fase. Ethnicity should not be unduly stressed. It is right that migrants should acquire a positive self-image, but this should not be regarded as a prime objective of intercultural education.

GS: The minimum objectives of each project should be defined.

VS: Intercultural education should be regarded as an asset rather than as something designed for "backward" people.

V. Rapporteur's concluding remarks

I have tried in this report to summarise the principal points emerging from the statements and discussions of the seminar. This summary will inevitably bear traces of my own opinions despite every effort to remain objective.

The seminar highlighted a number of key themes which, in my view, can influence the development of interculturalism. These prompt me to make some personal comments.

1. It has never been easy to link theory and practice. The multitude of questions arising at practical level are an indication of the imperative need for a theoretical basis. The seminar tried to advance towards a better transition between these two areas. Moreover, the forthcoming establishment of a Centre of Pedagogy, whose staff will provide backing for practitioners, will help to stimulate such interaction.

It should, however, be emphasised that the scientific world cannot unearth ready-made solutions. Demand for research is considerable. Nevertheless, the prospects are fairly reassuring in view of the ministerial plan to set up a Scientific Centre for Documentation and Research. Let us hope that the fruits of this centre's work will reach the practical level. Let us hope, too, that the importance of extending theoretical knowledge will be realised: children of immigrants are not just pupils. The only way to relate to them is through basic and theoretical initiation in the various components of their particular world which have led to their current situation.

2. This Scientific Centre will seek contacts with other countries, which prompts the idea of broadening the national or regional approach to a European or even world-wide one. It is always beneficial to compare one's knowledge with that of one's neighbours and get one's own opinions into perspective. Barriers in the fields of knowledge must be torn down.

3. It is heartening to note that so many initiatives are being taken at local level. Here too, however, it seems necessary to adopt a more outward-looking approach by finding out what one's colleagues are doing and by discussing successes or failures, as the case may be. This is where the creation of co-ordination networks is so vital, an idea that is incidentally part of the Community Minister's plans.

4. The majority of teachers in service had to train on the job. Up to now, there have been few opportunities for intensive retraining: the launching of the Louvain University courses for teachers was among the first initiatives in this connection. Further initiatives of this kind should be taken so as to reach all levels of the teaching profession. In view of the demands which retraining courses place on those attending them, they should be incorporated into teachers' overall duties.

In order to ensure that such a situation does not arise again in the future, intercultural education should become part of basic teacher training. The recent prolongation of such training in Belgium provides a golden opportunity for reorganisation.

5. Teachers have an important role to play in connection with the children of minority groups. Their attitudes may have weighty repercussions. Accordingly, they should take care not to adopt a paternalistic attitude to immigrant children and not to stigmatise them by over-emphasising differences between ethnic groups. It should not be forgotten that intercultural education is for all children, both native-born and migrant.

In my opinion, the importance of rationality should not be underestimated. To sum up, it is essential to provide the children of immigrants with opportunities for increasing their knowledge and developing their skills so that they may hold their own, and indeed prosper, in our society.

6. A great deal of work remains to be done. Even though progress can only be made step by step, it is important to work on a long-term basis. For this purpose, measures of a structural nature will prove more effective than scattered initiatives of a temporary kind.

Finally, education alone clearly cannot ensure the integration of interculturalism. The results will only be genuinely effective if the whole of society contributes to the effort.

ANNEXE I
APPENDIX I

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